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Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman October 6, 2006

It looks like the White House is trying to make Susan Ralston the scapegoat.

There is a lot that we don't yet know about the assistance that Ms. Ralston provided Mr. Abramoff from inside the White House. But there are also many unanswered questions about the assistance that higher-ranking White House officials appeared to provide Mr. Abramoff. Some of the most important interactions between the White House and the Abramoff team appear to involve Ken Mehlman, the former White House political director, not Ms. Ralston.

The bipartisan report released by the Government Reform Committee documented 485 lobbying contacts between Mr. Abramoff and his associates and White House officials, including 186 contacts that occurred over meals, many at exclusive restaurants in Washington. Ms. Ralston accounts for just a small fraction of these lobbying contacts and meals. According to the documents released by the Committee, she was involved in just 69 of the lobbying contacts (less than 15%) and just 14 of the meals (less than 10%). The vast majority of lobbying contacts and meals with White House officials documented in the report were with White House officials other than Ms. Ralston.

It is ludicrous for the White House to say it considers the review of Committee report "complete" when it has not provided answers to any of the most important questions involving Mr. Mehlman and other senior White House officials.